

“HE COMES WITH CLOUDS”**NO. 1989****A SERMON****DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,****AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“Behold, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him:
and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.”*

Revelation 1:7.

IN reading the chapter we observed how the beloved John saluted the seven churches in Asia with, “Grace and peace be unto you.” Blessed men scatter blessings. When the *benediction* of God rests on us we pour out benedictions upon others.

From benediction John’s gracious heart rose into *adoration* of the great King of Saints. As our hymn puts it, “The holy to the holiest leads.” They that are good at blessing men will be quick at blessing God.

It is a wonderful doxology which John has given us, “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” I like the Revised Version for its alliteration in this case, although I cannot prefer it for other reasons. It runs thus: “Unto Him that *loves* us, and *loosed* us from our sins by His blood.” Truly our Redeemer has loosed us from sin, but the mention of His blood suggests washing rather than loosing. We can keep the alliteration and yet retain the meaning of cleansing if we read the passage, “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us.” *Loved* us, and *washed* us; carry those two words home with you, let them lie upon your tongue to sweeten your breath for prayer and praise. “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us, be glory and dominion forever and ever.”

Then John tells of the dignity which the Lord has put upon us in making us kings and priests, and from this he ascribes royalty and dominion unto the Lord Himself. John had been extolling the Great King, whom he calls, “The Prince of the kings of the earth.” Such indeed He was, and is, and is to be. When John had touched upon that royalty which is natural to our divine Lord, and that dominion which has come to Him by conquest, and by the gift of the Father as the reward of all His travail, he then went on to note that He has “made us kings.” Our Lord’s royalty He diffuses among His redeemed. We praise Him because He is in Himself a king, and next, because He is a king-maker, the fountain of honor and majesty. He has not only enough of royalty for Himself, but He hands a measure of His dignity to His people. He makes kings out of such common stuff as He finds in us poor sinners. Shall we not adore Him for this? Shall we not cast our crowns at His feet? He gave our crowns to us; shall we not give them to Him? “To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” King by Your divine nature! King by filial right! King-maker, lifting up the beggar from the dunghill to set him among princes! King of kings by the unanimous love of all Your crowned ones! You are He whom Your brethren shall praise! Reign forever and ever! Unto You be hosannas of welcome and hallelujahs of praise. Lord of the earth and heaven, let all things that be, or ever shall be, render unto You all glory in the highest degree. Brethren, do not your souls take fire as you think of the praises of Immanuel? Gladly would I fill the universe with His praise. Oh for a thousand tongues to sing the glories of the Lord Jesus! If the Spirit who dictated the words of John has taken possession of our spirits, we shall find adoration to be our highest delight. Never are we so near to heaven as when we are absorbed in the worship of Jesus, our Lord and God. Oh, that I could now adore Him as I shall do when, delivered from this encumbering body, my soul shall behold Him in the fullness of His glory!

It would seem from the chapter that the adoration of John was increased by his *expectation* of the Lord’s second coming, for He cries, “Behold, He comes with clouds.” His adoration awoke his expectation, which all the while was lying in his soul as an element of that vehement heat of reverent love

which he poured forth in his doxology. “Behold, He comes,” he said, and thus he revealed one source of his reverence. “Behold, He comes,” he said, and this exclamation was the result of his reverence. He adored until his faith realized his Lord, and became a second and nobler sight.

I think, too, that his reverence was deepened and his adoration was rendered more fervent by his conviction of the speediness of his Lord’s coming. “Behold, He comes,” or is coming; he means to assert that He is even now on His way. As workmen are moved to be more diligent in service when they hear their master’s footsteps, so, doubtless, saints are quickened in their devotion when they are conscious that He whom they worship is drawing near. He has gone away to the Father for a while, and so He has left us alone in this world, but He has said, “I will come again and receive you unto Myself,” and we are confident that He will keep His word. Sweet is the remembrance of that loving promise. That assurance is pouring its savor into John’s heart while he is adoring, and it becomes inevitable, as well as most fit and proper, that his doxology should at its close introduce him to the Lord Himself, and cause him to cry out, “Behold, He comes.” Having worshipped among the pure in heart, he sees the Lord; having adored the King, he sees Him assume the judgement seat, and appear in the clouds of heaven. When once we enter upon heavenly things we know not how far we can go, nor how high we can climb. John who began with blessing the churches now beholds His Lord.

May the Holy Spirit help us reverently to think of the wondrous coming of our blessed Lord, when He shall appear to the delight of His people and the dismay of the ungodly!

There are three things in the text. They will seem commonplace to some of you, and indeed, they are the commonplace of our divine faith, and yet nothing can be of greater importance. The first is, *our Lord Jesus comes*; “Behold He comes with clouds.” The second is, *our Lord Jesus Christ’s coming will be seen of all*, “Every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him.” And in the third place, *this coming will cause great sorrow*, “All kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him.”

I. May the Holy Spirit help us while, in the first place, we remember that OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST COMES!

This announcement is thought worthy of a note of admiration. As the Latins would say, there is an “*Ecce*” placed here—“*Behold, He comes.*” As in the old books the printers put hands in the margin pointing to special passages, such is this “*behold!*” It is a *Nota Bene* calling upon us to note well what we are reading. Here is something which we are to *hold* and *behold*. We now hear a voice crying, “Come and see!” The Holy Spirit never uses superfluous words, or redundant notes of exclamation; when He cries, “Behold!” it is because there is reason for deep and lasting attention. Will you turn away when He bids you pause and ponder, linger and look? Oh, you that have been beholding vanity, come and behold the fact that Jesus comes. You that have been beholding this, and beholding that, and thinking of nothing worthy of your thoughts, forget these passing sights and spectacles, and for once behold a scene which has no parallel.

It is not a monarch in her jubilee, but the King of kings in His glory. That same Jesus who went up from Olivet into heaven is coming again to earth in like manner as His disciples saw Him go up into heaven. Come and behold this great sight. If ever there was a thing in the world worth looking at, it is this. Behold and see if there was ever glory like unto His glory! Harken to the midnight cry, “Behold, the Bridegroom comes!” It has practically to do with you. “Go you forth to meet Him.” This voice is to you, O sons of men. Do not carelessly turn aside, for the Lord God Himself demands your attention; He commands you to “Behold!” Will you be blind when God bids you behold? Will you shut your eyes when your Savior cries, “Behold?” When the finger of inspiration points the way, will not your eyes follow where it directs you? “Behold, He comes.” O my hearers, look here, I beseech you.

If we read the words of our text carefully, this “Behold” shows us first, that *this coming is to be vividly realized*. I think I see John. He is in the spirit, but all of a sudden he seems startled into a keener and more solemn attention. His mind is more awake than usual, though he was always a man of bright eyes that saw afar. We always liken him to the eagle for the height of his flight and the keenness of his vision, yet all of a sudden, even he seems startled with a more astounding vision! He cries out, “Behold! Behold!” He has caught sight of His Lord. He says not, “He will come by and by,” but, “I can see Him; He is now coming.” He has evidently realized the Second Advent. He has so conceived of the second coming of the Lord that it has become a matter of fact to Him; a matter to be spoken of, and even to be writ-

ten down. “Behold, He comes!” Have you and I ever realized the coming of Christ so fully as this? Perhaps we believe that He will come. I should hope that we all do *that*. If we believe that the Lord Jesus has come the first time, we believe also that He will come the second time, but are these equally assured truths to us? Perhaps we have vividly realized the first appearing; from Bethlehem to Golgotha, and from Calvary to Olivet we have traced the Lord, understanding that blessed cry, “Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world!” Yes, the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. But have we with equal firmness grasped the thought that He comes again without a sin-offering unto salvation? Do we now say to each other, as we meet in happy fellowship, “Yes, our Lord comes”? It should be to us not only a prophecy assuredly believed among us, but a scene pictured in our souls, and anticipated in our hearts. My imagination has often set forth that dread scene, but better still, my faith has realized it. I have heard the chariot wheels of the Lord’s approach, and I have endeavored to set my house in order for His reception. I have felt the shadow of that great cloud which shall attend Him, dampening the ardor of my worldliness. I hear even now in spirit the sound of the last trumpet, whose tremendous blast startles my soul to serious action, and puts force into my life. Would God that I lived more completely under the influence of that august event!

Brothers and Sisters, to this realization I invite you. I wish that we could go together in this, until as we went out of the house we said to one another, “Behold, He comes!” One said to his fellow, after the Lord had risen, “The Lord has risen indeed.” I want you tonight to feel just as certain that the Lord is coming indeed, and I would have you say as much to one another. We are sure that He will come, and that He is on the way, but the benefit of a more vivid realization would be incalculable.

This coming is to be zealously proclaimed, for John does not merely calmly say, “He comes,” but he vigorously cries, “Behold, He comes.” Just as the herald of a king, prefaces his message by a trumpet blast that calls attention, so John cries, “Behold!” As the old town crier, was known to say, “O yes! O yes! O yes!” or to use some other striking formula by which he called upon men to note his announcement, so John stands in the midst of us, and cries, “Behold, He comes!” He calls attention by that emphatic word “Behold!” It is no ordinary message that he brings, and he would not have us treat his word as a commonplace saying. He throws his heart into the announcement. He proclaims it loudly, he proclaims it solemnly, and He proclaims it with authority, “Behold, He comes.”

Brethren, no truth ought to be more frequently proclaimed, next to the first coming of the Lord, than His second coming, and you cannot thoroughly set forth all the ends and bearings of the first advent if you forget the second. At the Lord’s Supper, there is no discerning the Lord’s body unless you discern His first coming, but there is no drinking of His cup to its fullness, unless you hear Him say, “Until I come.” You must look forward, as well as backward. So must it be with all our ministries; they must look to Him on the cross and on the throne. We must vividly realize that He, who has once come, is coming yet again, or else our testimony will be marred, and one-sided. We shall make lame work of preaching and teaching if we leave out either advent.

And next, *it is to be unquestionably asserted*. “Behold, He comes.” It is not, “Perhaps He will come,” nor, “Perhaps He may yet appear.” “Behold, He comes” should be dogmatically asserted as an absolute certainty, which has been realized by the heart of the man who proclaims it. “Behold, He comes.” All the prophets say that He will come. From Enoch down to the last that spoke by inspiration, they declare, “The Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints.” You shall not find one who has spoken by the authority of God, who does not, either directly or by implication, assert the coming of the Son of man, when the multitudes born of woman shall be summoned to His bar, to receive the recompense of their deeds. All the promises are travailing with this prognostication, “Behold, He comes.” We have His own word for it, and this makes assurance doubly sure. He has told us that He will come again. He often assured His disciples that if He went away from them, He would come again to them, and He left us the Lord’s Supper as a parting token to be observed until He comes. As often as we break bread we are reminded of the fact that, though it is a most blessed ordinance, yet it is a temporary one, and will cease to be celebrated when our absent Lord is once again present with us.

What, dear brethren, is there to hinder Christ from coming? When I have studied and thought over this word, “Behold, He comes,” yes, I have said to myself, indeed He does; who shall hold Him back?

His heart is with His church on earth. In the place where He fought the battle He desires to celebrate the victory. His delights are with the sons of men. All His saints are waiting for the day of His appearing, and He is waiting also. The very earth in her sorrow and her groaning travails for His coming, which is to be her redemption. The creation is made subject to vanity for a little while; but when the Lord shall come again the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. We might question whether He would come a second time if He had not already come the first time, but if He came to Bethlehem, be assured that His feet shall yet stand upon Olivet. If He came to die, doubt not that He will come to reign. If He came to be despised and rejected of men, why should we doubt that He will come to be admired in all them that believe? His sure coming is to be unquestionably asserted.

Dear friends, this fact that He will come again, *is to be taught as demanding our immediate interest*. “Behold, He comes with clouds.” Behold, look at it; meditate on it. It is worth thinking of. It concerns yourself. Study it again and again. “He comes.” He will so soon be here that it is put in the present tense, “He comes.” That shaking of the earth, that blotting out of sun and moon, that fleeing of heaven and earth before His face—all these are so nearly here that John describes them as accomplished. “Behold, He comes.”

There is this sense lying in the background—that *He is already on the way*. All that He is doing in providence and grace is a preparation for His coming. All the events of human history, all the great decisions of His august majesty whereby He rules all things—all these are tending towards the day of His appearing. Do not think that He delays His coming, and then all of a sudden He will rush here in hot haste. He has arranged for it to take place as soon as wisdom allows. We know not what may make the present delay imperative, but the Lord knows, and that suffices. You grow uneasy because nearly two thousand years have passed since His ascension, and Jesus has not yet come, but you do not know what had to be arranged for, and how far the lapse of time was absolutely necessary for the Lord’s designs. Those are no little matters which have filled up the great pause; the intervening centuries have teemed with wonders. A thousand things may have been necessary in heaven itself before the consummation of all things could be arrived at. When our Lord comes it shall be seen that He came as quickly as He could, speaking after the manner of His infinite wisdom, for He cannot behave Himself otherwise than wisely, perfectly, divinely. He cannot be moved by fear or passion so as to act hastily as you and I too often do. He dwells in the leisure of eternity, and in the serenity of omnipotence. He has not to measure out days, and months, and years, and to accomplish so much in such a space or else leave His lifework undone, but according to the power of an endless life He proceeds steadily on, and to Him a thousand years are but as one day. Therefore be assured that the Lord is even now coming. He is making everything tend that way. All things are working towards that grand climax. At this moment, and every moment since He went away, the Lord Jesus has been coming back again. “Behold, He comes!” He is on the way! He is nearer every hour!

And we are told that *His coming will be attended by a peculiar sign*. “Behold, He comes with clouds.” We shall have no need to question whether it is the Son of man who has come, or whether He is indeed come. This is to be no secret matter; His coming will be as manifest as yonder clouds. In the wilderness the presence of Jehovah was known by a visible pillar of cloud by day, and an equally visible pillar of fire by night. That pillar of cloud was the sure token that the Lord was in His holy place, dwelling between the cherubim. Such is the token of the coming of the Lord Christ—

*“Every eye the cloud shall scan,
Ensign of the Son of man.”*

So it is written, “And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” I cannot quote at this time all those many passages of Scripture in which it is indicated that our Lord will come either sitting upon a cloud, or “with the clouds,” or “with the clouds of heaven,” but such expressions are abundant. Is it not to show that His coming will be *majestic*? He makes the clouds His chariots. He comes with hosts of attendants, and these of a nobler sort than earthly monarchs can summon to do them homage. With clouds of angels, cherubim and seraphim, and all the armies of heaven He comes. With all the forces of nature, thundercloud and blackness of tempest, the Lord of all

makes His triumphant entrance to judge the world. The clouds are the dust of His feet in that dread day of battle when He shall ease Him of His adversaries, shaking them out of the earth with His thunder, and consuming them with the devouring flame of His lightning. All heaven shall gather with its utmost pomp to the great appearing of the Lord, and all the terrible grandeur of nature shall then be seen at its full. Not as the Man of sorrows, despised and rejected of men, shall Jesus come, but as Jehovah came upon Sinai in the midst of thick clouds and a terrible darkness, so shall He come, whose coming shall be the final judgment.

The clouds are meant to set forth the *might*, as well as the majesty, of His coming. “Ascribe you strength unto God: His excellency is over Israel, and His strength is in the clouds.” This was the royal token given by Daniel the prophet in his seventh chapter, at the thirteenth verse, “I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven.” Not less than divine is the glory of the Son of God, who once had not where to lay His head. The most sublime objects in nature shall most fitly minister to the manifest glory of the returning King of men. “Behold, He comes,” not with the swaddling bands of His infancy, the weariness of His manhood, the shame of His death, but with all the glorious tapestry of heaven’s high chambers. The hanging of the divine throne room shall aid His state.

The clouds, also, denote *the terror of His coming to the ungodly*. His saints shall be caught up together with Him in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, but to those that shall remain on earth the clouds shall turn their blackness and horror of darkness. Then shall the impenitent behold this dread vision—the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven. The clouds shall fill them with dread, and the dread shall be abundantly justified, for those clouds are big with vengeance, and shall burst in judgment on their heads. His great white throne, though it is bright and lustrous with hope to His people, will with its very brightness and whiteness of immaculate justice strike dead the hopes of all those who trusted that they might live in sin and yet go unpunished. “Behold, He comes. He comes with clouds.”

I am in happy circumstances tonight, because my subject requires no effort of imagination from me. To indulge fancy on such a theme would be a wretched profanation of so sublime a subject, which in its own simplicity should come home to all hearts. Think clearly for a moment, till the meaning becomes real to you. Jesus Christ is coming, coming in unknown splendor. When He comes He will be enthroned far above the attacks of His enemies, the persecutions of the godless, and the sneers of skeptics. He is coming in the clouds of heaven, and we shall be among the witnesses of His appearing. Let us dwell upon this truth.

II. Our second observation is this; **OUR LORD’S COMING WILL BE SEEN BY ALL.** “Behold, He comes with clouds, *and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him.*”

I gather from this expression, first, that *it will be a literal appearing, and an actual sight*. If the Second Advent was to be a spiritual manifestation, to be perceived by the minds of men, the phraseology would be, “Every mind shall perceive Him.” But it is not so; we read, “Every eye shall see Him.” Now, the mind can behold the spiritual, but the eye can only see that which is distinctly material and visible. The Lord Jesus Christ will not come spiritually, for in that sense He is always here, but He will come really and substantially, for every eye shall see Him, even those unspiritual eyes which gazed on Him with hate, and pierced Him. Go not away and dream, and say to yourself, “Oh, there is some spiritual meaning about all this.” Do not destroy the teaching of the Holy Spirit by the idea that there will be a spiritual manifestation of the Christ of God, but that a literal appearing is out of the question. That would be altering the record. The Lord Jesus shall come to earth a second time as literally as He has come a first time. The same Christ who ate a piece of a broiled fish and of a honeycomb after He had risen from the dead, the same who said, “Handle Me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see Me have”—this same Jesus, with a material body, is to come in the clouds of heaven. In the same manner as He went up He shall come down. He shall be literally seen. The words cannot be honestly read in any other way.

“Every eye shall see Him.” Yes, I do literally expect to see my Lord Jesus with these eyes of mine, even as that saint expected who long ago fell asleep, believing that though the worms devoured his body, yet in his flesh he would see God, whom his eyes should see for himself, and not another. There will be a real resurrection of the body, though the moderns doubt it; such a resurrection that we shall see

Jesus with our own eyes. We shall not find ourselves in a shadowy, dreamy land of floating fictions, where we may perceive, but cannot see. We shall not be airy nothings, mysterious, vague, impalpable, but we shall literally see our glorious Lord, whose appearing will be no phantom show, or shadow dance. Never day more real than the day of judgement; never sight more true than the Son of man upon the throne of His glory. Will you take this statement home, that you may feel the force of it? We are getting too far away from facts nowadays, and too much into the realm of myths and notions. “Every eye shall see Him,” in this there shall be no delusion.

Note well that *He is to be seen of all kinds of living men*; every eye shall see Him; the king and the peasant, the most learned and the most ignorant. Those that were blind before shall see when He appears. I remember a man born blind who loved our Lord most intensely, and he was known to glory in this, that his eyes had been reserved for his Lord. He said, “The first whom I shall ever see will be the Lord Jesus Christ. The first sight that greets my newly-opened eyes will be the Son of man in His glory.” There is great comfort in this to all who are now unable to behold the sun. Since “every eye shall see Him,” you also shall see the King in His beauty. Small pleasure is this to eyes that are full of filthiness and pride; you care not for this sight, and yet you must see it whether you please or do not please. You have up to now shut your eyes to good things, but when Jesus comes you *must* see Him. All that dwell upon the face of the earth, if not at the same moment, yet with the same certainty, shall behold the once crucified Lord. They will not be able to hide themselves, nor to hide Him from their eyes. They will dread the sight, but it will come upon them, even as the sun shines on the thief who delights in the darkness. They will be obliged to own in dismay that they behold the Son of man; they will be so overwhelmed with the sight that there will be no denying it.

He will be seen of those who have been long since dead. What a sight that will be for Judas, and for Pilate, and for Caiaphas, and for Herod! What a sight it will be for those who, in their lifetime, said that there was no Savior, and no need of one, or that Jesus was a mere man, and that His blood was not a propitiation for sin! Those that scoffed and reviled Him have long since died, but they shall all rise again, and rise to this heritage among the rest—that they shall see Him whom they blasphemed sitting in the clouds of heaven. Prisoners are troubled at the sight of the judge. The trumpet of assize brings no music to the ears of criminals. But you must hear it, O impenitent sinner! Even in your grave you must hear the voice of the Son of God, and live, and come forth from the tomb, to receive the things done in your body, whether they were good or bad. Death cannot hide you, nor the vault conceal you, nor rotteness and corruption deliver you. You are bound to see in your body the Lord who will judge both you and your fellows.

It is mentioned here that *He will especially be seen by those that pierced Him*. In this is included all the company that nailed Him to the tree, with those that took the spear and made the gash in His side; indeed, all that had a hand in His cruel crucifixion. It includes all of these, but it comprehends many more besides. “They also who pierced Him” are by no means a few. Who have pierced Him? Why those that once professed to love Him, and have gone back to the world. Those who once ran well, “What hindered them?” And now they use their tongues to speak against the Christ whom once they professed to love. They also have pierced Him whose inconsistent lives have brought dishonor upon the sacred name of Jesus. They also have pierced Him, who refused His love, stifled their consciences, and refused His rebukes. Alas, that so many of you should be piercing Him now by your base neglect of His salvation! They that went every Sunday to hear of Him, and that remained hearers only, destroying their own souls rather than yield to His infinite love; these pierced His tender heart. Dear hearers, I wish I could plead effectually with you tonight, so that you would not continue any longer among the number of those that pierced Him. If you will look at Jesus now, and mourn for your sin, He will put your sin away, and then you will not be ashamed to see Him in that day. Even though you did pierce Him, you will be able to sing, “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.” But, remember, if you persevere in piercing Him, and fighting against Him, you will still have to see Him in that day, to your terror and despair. He will be seen by you and by me, however evil we may behave. And what horror will that sight cost us!

I felt unfit to preach to you tonight, but last Lord’s Day I said that I would preach tonight if I could possibly manage it. It seemed barely possible, but I could not do less than keep my word, and I also

longed to be with you, for your sakes, for perhaps there may not remain many more occasions on which I shall be permitted to preach the gospel among you. I am often ill; who knows how soon I shall come to my end? I would use all that remains to me of physical strength and providential opportunity. We never know how soon we may be cut off, and then we are gone forever from the opportunity of benefiting our fellow men. It would be a pity to be taken away with one opportunity of doing good unused. So would I earnestly plead with you under the shadow of this great truth; I would urge you to make ready, since we shall both behold the Lord in the day of His appearing. Yes, I shall stand in that great throng. You also will be there. How will you feel? You are not accustomed, perhaps, to attend a place of worship, but you will be there, and the spot will be very solemn to you. You may absent yourself from the assemblies of the saints, but you will not be able to absent yourself from the gathering of that day. You will be there, one in that great multitude, and you will see Jesus the Lord as truly as if you were the only person before Him, and He will look upon you as certainly as if you were the only one that was summoned to His bar.

Will you kindly think of all this as I close this second head? Silently repeat to yourself the words, “Every eye shall see Him, and they also that pierced Him.”

III. And now I must close with the third head, which is a painful one, but needs to be enlarged upon; **HIS COMING WILL CAUSE GREAT SORROW.** What does the text say about His coming? “All kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him.”

“All kindreds of the earth.” Then *this sorrow will be very general.* You thought, perhaps, that when Christ came, He would come to a glad world, welcoming Him with song and music. You thought that there might be a few ungodly persons who would be destroyed with the breath of His mouth, but that the bulk of mankind would receive Him with delight. See how different—“All kindreds of the earth,” that is, all sorts of men that belong to the earth, all earth-born men, men out of all nations and kindreds and tongues shall weep and wail, and gnash their teeth at His coming. O sirs, this is a sad outlook! We have no smooth things to prophesy. What do you think of this?

And next, *this sorrow will be very great.* They shall “wail.” I cannot put into English the full meaning of that most expressive word. Sound it at length, and it conveys its own meaning. It is as when men wring their hands and burst out into a loud cry, or as when eastern women, in their anguish, tear their garments, and lift up their voices with the most mournful notes. All the kindreds of the earth shall wail; wail as a mother laments over her dead child; wail as a man might wail who found himself hopelessly imprisoned and doomed to die. Such will be the hopeless grief of all the kindreds of the earth at the sight of Christ in the clouds; if they remain impenitent, they shall not be able to be silent, they shall not be able to repress or conceal their anguish, but they shall wail, or openly give vent to their horror. What a sound that will be which will go up before high heaven when Jesus sits upon the cloud, and in the fullness of His power summons them to judgment! Then “they shall wail because of Him.”

Will your voice be heard in that wailing? Will your heart be breaking in that general dismay? How will you escape? If you are one of the kindreds of the earth, and remain impenitent, you will wail with the rest of them. Unless you now fly to Christ, and hide yourself in Him, and so become one of the kindred of heaven—one of His chosen and blood-washed ones—who shall praise His name for washing them from their sins—unless you do this, there will be wailing at the judgment seat of Christ, and you will be in it.

Then it is quite clear that men will not be universally converted when Christ comes; because, if they were so, they would not wail. Then they would lift up the cry, “Welcome, welcome, Son of God!” The coming of Christ would be as the hymn puts it—

*“Hark, those bursts of acclamation!
Hark, those loud triumphant chords!
Jesus takes the highest station.
Oh, what joy the sight affords!”*

These acclamations come from His people. But according to the text the multitude of mankind will weep and wail, and therefore they will not be among His people. Do not, therefore, look for salvation to some coming day, but believe in Jesus now, and find in Him your Savior at once. If you joy in Him now, you shall much more rejoice in Him in that day, but if you will have cause to wail at His coming, it will be well to wail at once.

Note one more truth. It is quite certain that when Jesus comes in those latter days *men will not be expecting great things of Him*. You know the talk they have nowadays about “a larger hope.” Today they deceive the people with the idle dream of repentance and restoration after death, a fiction unsupported by the least tittle of Scripture. If these kindreds of the earth, expected that when Christ would come they would all die out and cease to be, they would rejoice that thereby they escaped the wrath of God. Would not each unbeliever say, “It was a consummation devoutly to be wished”? If they thought that at His coming there would be a universal restoration and a general jail delivery of souls long shut up in prison, would they wail? If Jesus could be supposed to come to proclaim a general restoration they would not wail, but shout for joy. Ah, no! It is because His coming to the impenitent is black with blank despair that they will wail because of Him. If His first coming does not give you eternal life, His second coming will not. If you do not hide in His wounds when He comes as your Savior, there will be no hiding place for you when He comes as your Judge. They will weep and wail because, having rejected the Lord Jesus, they have turned their backs on the last possibility of hope.

Why do they wail *because of Him*? Will it not be because they will see Him in His glory, and they will recollect that they slighted and despised Him? They will see Him come to judge them, and they will remember that once He stood at their door with mercy in His hands and said, “Open to Me,” but they would not admit Him. They refused His blood; they refused His righteousness; they trifled with His sacred name, and now they must give an account for this wickedness. They put Him away in scorn, and now, when He comes, they find that they can trifle with Him no longer. The days of child’s play and of foolish delays are over, and now they have solemnly to give in their life’s account. See, the books are opened! They are covered with dismay as they remember their sins, and know that they are written down by a faithful pen. They must give an account, and unwashed and unforgiven they cannot render that account without knowing that the sentence will be, “Depart, you cursed.” This is why they weep and wail because of Him.

O souls, my natural love of ease makes me wish that I could preach pleasant things to you, but they are not in my commission. I need scarcely wish, however, to preach a soft gospel, for so many are already doing it to your cost. As I love your immortal souls, I dare not flatter you. As I shall have to answer for it in the last great day, I must tell you the truth—

*“You sinners seek His face
Whose wrath you cannot bear.”*

Seek the mercy of God tonight. I have come here in pain to implore you to be reconciled to God. “Kiss the Son lest He be angry, and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.”

But if you will not have my Lord Jesus, He comes all the same for that. He is on the road now, and when He comes you will wail because of Him. Oh that you would make Him your friend, and then meet Him with joy! Why will you die? He gives life to all those who trust Him. Believe and live.

God save your souls tonight, and He shall have the glory. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—REVELATION 1.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—360, 346, 364.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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